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AFRL takes advantage of CGO Initiative Program

by Mindy Cooper, AFRL Materials and Manufacturing Directorate

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — The Air Force Research Laboratory Materials and Manufacturing Directorate has a Company Grade Officer Initiative Program that gives young researchers important opportunities.

The program is unique to the directorate and was established in 2002, by Dr. Charles Browning, the former director. The program provides company grade officers, which include lieutenants and captains, the opportunity to work on a special project outside their Core Technology Area.

The program serves three purposes: to develop lieutenants and captains through “hands-on” experience, mentorship and ownership of a project; to add to the overall science and technology knowledge base; and to develop a technological solution to a military need.

To be a part of the program, the CGO comes up with an area that he or she is interested in exploring, whether it is the development of a material, the modification of a product with military application potential, or the development of a technology prototype.

The CGO then prepares a paper that details the intended project, the specific need that it will fulfill, a list of experts that he or she plans to consult, as well as potential collaborators and teammates, an experimental plan and the estimated cost.

The paper is then submitted to Col. Timothy Sakulich, AFRL/ML director, for review and approval. Projects usually last six to 12 months and involve an investment of \$50,000 to \$100,000.

After the funding is granted, the CGO enters into a contract and begins the work. He or she may consult with the CGOIP project officer or focal point, 1st Lt. Shyam Munshi. Lt. Munshi provides guidance to help further the projects where needed.

“The CGO Initiative Program is a phenomenal junior force developmental tool,” Lieutenant Munshi said.

“It gives young officers the chance to take ownership of the



1st Lt Shyam Munshi (left) and 1st Lt Joseph La Monica explain the Company Grade Officers Initiative Program to visiting University of Iowa Reserve Officer Training Corps students at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. (Air Force photo by Mindy Cooper)

management and development of higher risk technology from idea to reality.”

The program has been responsible for the successful development of technologies that show strong promise in the field, including the lightweight body armor project which has produced a lighter product while increasing ballistic protection; identification of friend or foe system using a flexible fiber optic woven cloth to help identify soldiers in the field to avoid friendly fire incidents; and ALON — transparent armor that has the same stopping power as the standard armor, but at almost half the weight. Although none of these have moved in to mass production, the first two have items in the field.

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